

# **Gallatin Local Water Quality District Five-Year Strategic Plan For Fiscal Years 2010 Through 2014**

Prepared  
For  
Gallatin Local Water Quality District Board of Directors  
And  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality

By  
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**View Looking north from Amsterdam Road at the West Gallatin River**

## **ADOPTION**

The Gallatin Local Water Quality District Board of Directors adopted this five-year strategic plan by motion at the April 2, 2009 meeting of the Board of Directors.

## **AMENDMENTS**

Reserved for future amendments.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this five-year strategic plan is to provide long-range guidance to the Gallatin Local Water Quality District (District) Board of Directors and Staff for the five-year period from Fiscal-Year 2010 through Fiscal-Year 2014 (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2014). Fiscal years are used for the five-year strategic plan to coincide with budget years. The Board of Directors and staff held a Board retreat on January 14, 2008, to look back at past District activities and plan future activities. This strategic plan was developed as a result of the Board input and discussions at the retreat. It overlaps and updates the previous work plan for fiscal-year 2010 (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010).

The plan is intentionally general in nature and is focused on achieving the District's Mission based on long-range goals and objectives. The plan is designed to allow for flexibility in District programs and activities from year-to-year. More specific guidance is provided each fiscal-year by an annual work plan outlining the District's priorities for the year.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Creation**

The Gallatin County Commission created the Gallatin Local Water Quality District on December 5, 1995, by Resolution Number 1995-55. A Gallatin Local Water Quality District Program Application was submitted to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) on April 25, 1997. Based on a review of the District's Program Application, and an Environmental Assessment completed by MDEQ, the State of Montana Board of Environmental Review approved the Gallatin Local Water Quality District on June 20, 1997.

### **District Board**

The District was originally contained within the Environmental Health Division of the Gallatin City-County Health Department and governed by the Gallatin City-County Board of Health, with the addition of one Board member from the Gallatin Conservation District, and representatives from the City Councils of Bozeman, Belgrade and Manhattan. The District was reorganized in 1999 and is now a separate Department within Gallatin County and is governed by a dedicated Water Quality District Board of Directors consisting of members selected as required by Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 7-13-4516. The Board of Directors consists of the following representatives:

Gallatin County Commissioner  
Gallatin Conservation District Supervisor  
Gallatin City-County Board of Health Member  
Bozeman City Council City Member  
City of Bozeman At-Large Member  
Belgrade City Council Member  
City of Belgrade At-Large Member  
Manhattan Town Council Member  
Town of Manhattan At-Large Member

### **District Boundary**

The District overlays the middle third of Gallatin County, covering an area of 815 square miles as shown in figure 1. This area includes 460 square miles of land in private ownership and 355 square miles of land administered by Federal, State, and Local agencies (figure 1).

For many years there has been discussion of expanding the District Boundary. In the course of several Board meetings in 2008 the Board decided to formally pursue expanding the boundary to include the Gallatin County portion of the Big Sky area, the Churchill & Amsterdam area, and the Logan area. This strategic plan includes pursuing the boundary expansion.



**Figure 1.** Location of the Gallatin Local Water Quality District within Gallatin County

## **Staff**

District staff currently consists of a full-time Manager, two full-time Water Quality Specialists, and a half-time Administrative Assistant. In addition, temporary employees, including students from Montana State University and other educational institutions, may be hired to assist with various projects.

In fiscal-year 2008 the Board approved the addition of a second Water Quality Specialist position on a two-year, temporary, full-time basis. The position is temporary contingent on future funding. It is anticipated that the position might be made permanent during the period covered by this strategic plan if funding allows and the Board of Directors approves it.

## **WATER QUALITY DISTRICT MISSION AND PROGRAM APPROACH**

### **Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Gallatin Local Water Quality District is

*“To protect, preserve, and improve the quality of surface waters and ground waters within the Local Water Quality District”.*

While the District’s mission statement is focused on surface-water and ground-water quality, water-quantity issues are related to water-quality issues and are also considered.

### **District Service**

Built into all of the District’s programs and activities will be the general philosophy that the District is a place where citizens can get satisfactory answers to questions related to water resource issues. The District will strive to be a clearinghouse for information, and assist citizens with contacting other agencies and organizations as needed. This same level of service will be extended to local groups, organizations, and governmental agencies.

### **Watershed Perspective-Ground Water/Surface Water Interaction**

To aid in meeting the Mission of the District, programs and activities of the District will be based on a watershed perspective. Using this approach, the flow system is viewed as an interconnected whole rather than focusing on ground-water and surface-water features as separate resources. Development of a better understanding of the interactions between ground water and surface water is an important objective of the District. Although limited data are available, the hydrogeologic setting within the District suggests there is significant interaction between ground water and surface water due to the presence of shallow ground water in many areas, an extensive network of surface-water features, and the extensive use of irrigation within the boundaries of the District. Protecting and improving ground-water resources has a positive impact on surface-water resources and vice-versa.

### **Non-Regulatory Focus**

The District's programs and activities will be focused on non-regulatory activities. Activities are not anticipated to include development of any District regulations. However, the Board of Directors, with concurrence from the Gallatin County Commission, may authorize the District to pursue enforcement authority from the State to enforce provisions of the Montana Water Quality Act as allowed by MCA 17.30.1806 if warranted.

While the District's programs will not include development of local regulations, this does not preclude other agencies or interested organizations from developing regulations based on data collected by the District. The District may be indirectly involved in regulatory issues by providing data or comments to other agencies or organizations, when the regulatory issue(s) pertain to water resources within the District and the regulatory activities may have a positive or negative impact on the District's Mission. To aid in protecting water resources within the boundaries of the District, staff will aid local citizens by forwarding valid complaints regarding regulatory issues to the agencies responsible for enforcement of regulations designed to protect water resources.

## **WORK PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Goals**

The District's programs and activities will be focused on 1) maintaining an effective public education program, 2) maintaining a long-term water-quality and water-quantity monitoring network, and 3) collecting, compiling, and disseminating water resource information.

Research activities will be conducted as needed to complement these goals, and evaluate local water resource issues. As appropriate, the District will also track known water quality problems and advocate for remedial activities or corrective actions to protect water resources.

The following goals are established to guide the District during the strategic planning period:

**I. Education Goal:** *Conduct public education to increase public awareness and understanding of the importance of protecting and improving water resources within the District through District education programs and cooperation with educational programs conducted by other organizations.*

**II. Monitoring Goal:** *Maintain a long-term, water quality and quantity monitoring network, consisting of dedicated monitoring wells and selected surface-water sampling sites, to establish baseline data and begin long-term water quality and quantity monitoring.*

**III. Information Collection and Dissemination Goal:** *Collect, compile, and disseminate water-resource data and information for the benefit of all citizens, organizations, groups, and governmental agencies interested in water resources within the District.*



## **Objectives**

During the five-year strategic plan period District efforts will be focused on meeting the objectives listed below. Possible tasks to be completed to help meet each objective are listed below the objective. Many of these tasks are on-going activities.

### ***Education and Outreach Objectives***

#### **1. Coordinate District education activities with other organizations and agencies**

- Conduct outreach to educate other organizations and groups about the District
- Evaluate and use educational resources available from other organizations
- Participate with other organizations in cooperative education activities

#### **2. Develop District education resources**

- Maintain and Improve the District's Web site
- Provide links to other useful water resource web sites on the District web site
- Maintain and Improve the District's in-house reading library
- Develop and provide educational brochures and fact sheets on topics of interest
- Develop and provide educational presentations on topics of interest

#### **3. Develop District educational programs to supplement existing programs**

- District ground-water and surface-water interaction education
- Household hazardous waste minimization and disposal
- Pollution Prevention and proper handling of hazardous materials
- Non-point sources (stormwater, construction, agriculture, livestock)
- Wetlands (importance and protection)
- Source water protection for Public Water Supplies
- Water conservation practices
- Participate with and assist citizen groups interested in special studies
- Public education on private well and septic system care and maintenance.

#### **4. Conduct District outreach to improve public awareness of the District**

- Develop and distribute a periodic newsletter with educational information and a summary of District activities
- Develop and distribute an annual report summarizing yearly activities
- Provide presentations to home owners associations
- Provide presentations to area business, trade, and social organizations
- Participate in seminars, conferences, tours etc.
- Interact with and assist other County and City departments, and other agencies
- Use public media to increase public awareness of the District
- Offer information and assistance to District Public Water Supply operators
- Assist other agencies with developing solutions for hazardous waste disposal

### *District Monitoring Objectives*

- 5. Maintain and improve a District-wide ground-water monitoring well network**
  - Cooperate with the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) to maintain and improve wells included in the Statewide Monitoring Program
  - Incorporate continuous water-level monitoring into the monitoring well network
  - Obtain access to existing monitoring wells installed by others when appropriate
  - Secure grant funds for well construction, maintenance, and water quality sampling
- 6. Monitor known sources ground water contamination and advocate for remediation and/or infrastructure improvements to protect ground water quality**
  - Track remediation activities at established State and Federal Superfund Sites and work with DEQ and EPA to advocate for timely and effective remediation (Bozeman Solvent Site, Idaho Pole, others)
  - Track remediation activities at known leaking underground storage tank sites and work with DEQ to advocate for timely and effective remediation.
  - Track ground water monitoring activities required by DEQ at landfills, wastewater treatment plants, and other sites, and advocate for corrective actions when appropriate
  - Work with EPA to evaluate the use of Class V injections wells for disposal of non-domestic wastewater and advocate for improved treatment or closure when appropriate
- 7. Establish a District-wide surface-water monitoring site network**
  - Evaluate and select surface water sites for long-term monitoring
  - Collect and compile surface-water quality data to establish baselines and trends
  - Collect and compile surface-water flow data within District to the extent practical
- 8. Develop a program to monitor stormwater quality in cooperation with municipalities and Gallatin County**
  - Conduct sampling to document stormwater quality
  - Assess current methods of stormwater treatment and recommend improvements to protect water quality

### *Information Collection and Dissemination Objectives*

- 9. Cooperate with others to develop and maintain District-wide databases**
  - Provide ground-water data within the District to the MBMG Ground Water information Center (GWIC)
  - Develop and maintain a GIS compatible database for ground-water quality data to supplement the GWIC database
  - Develop and maintain a GIS compatible database for surface-water quality data to supplement the EPA STORET database
  - Assist DEQ with updating its public water supply database
  - Coordinate with other departments, agencies and groups for data collection
- 10. Compile historical water resource data and enter in GIS data sets**
  - Compile water resource data from old subdivision files
  - Compile water-quality and water-quantity data from published reports
  - Compile aquifer property data from published reports and agency files

**11. Construct GIS data layers for incorporation into the County's Internet map site**

- Post a map layer showing the District's ground water monitoring well network
- Create and post a map layer showing the District's surface water monitoring sites
- Create and post a map layer showing known sources of ground water contamination
- Post the map layer previously created for wetland and riparian areas

**12. Support and conduct water resource research within the District**

- Encourage and support research projects at MSU and other Universities
- Encourage and support research by other agencies or groups
- Evaluate stormwater impacts to water resources
- Study ground-water level trends in District (declining water levels)
- Study impacts to ground water and surface water from development
- Study hydrogeologic subareas within the District
- Compile water resource data dealing with disaster response, in cooperation with Public Health, Environmental Health, and Emergency Response agencies
- Conduct research to assess local water quality problems as they arise
- Develop educational information for disaster related water resource issues

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Gallatin Local Water Quality District office is located in the Gallatin County Courthouse Annex the following address:

**Judge Guenther Memorial Center  
1709 West College Street, Suite 104  
Bozeman, Montana  
59715**

For information or questions regarding this work plan, or the current status of District activities, contact Alan English at the address listed above, or by phone at **(406) 582-3148**, or email at [alan.english@gallatin.mt.gov](mailto:alan.english@gallatin.mt.gov). For additional information about the Gallatin Local Water Quality District and Water Resources visit our web site at [www.gallatin.mt.gov/GLWOD](http://www.gallatin.mt.gov/GLWOD).